

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 637

By Eldridge

A RESOLUTION to recognize Kelly Holmes on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of industry; and

WHEREAS, Madison County Fire Chief Kelly Holmes is one such estimable person who has served with distinction for more than fifty years as the motivational force behind the success of the Madison County Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, Chief Holmes will be taking a much deserved retirement on June 30, 2009; and

WHEREAS, born on December 6, 1929, in Bemis, Kelly Holmes was raised in Madison County. After graduating from J. B. Young High School in 1947, he deepened his education by taking classes in firefighting, emergency, and rescue; and

WHEREAS, while working as a carpenter for a local lumber company, Mr. Holmes was drafted into the United States Army, honorably serving as a Supply Sergeant from 1952-1954 during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, following his discharge from the Army, Mr. Holmes joined the Consolidated Aluminum Company, where he served with acumen and alacrity until 1976, earning the respect of his peers and superiors alike for the quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, after playing an integral role in the 1958 organization of the Madison County Fire Department, which is staffed entirely by volunteer firefighters, Kelly Holmes rose to the position of Captain in 1953, was named Fire Chief in 1963, and began serving the post on a full-time basis in 1976; and

WHEREAS, Chief Holmes has guided the Madison County Fire Department with acumen and alacrity through five decades, ensuring its growth from its humble beginnings, during which time he and his fellow firefighters had only Army surplus equipment with which to do their jobs, to its current standing as a department with sixteen stations, sixty-five pieces of firefighting equipment, and 162 firefighters; and

WHEREAS, Chief Holmes and members of his family have served the Madison County Fire Department for more than 173 combined years, a period which includes Chief Holmes's service; that of his wife, Willadene, who has served as the department's dispatcher and secretary for more than fifty years; that of his son, Ralph Holmes, a retired Battalion Chief for the Jackson City Fire Department, which he served for thirty years; and that of his grandson, Joe Holmes, who has dedicated four years to the Madison County Fire Department as a firefighter; and

WHEREAS, throughout his many years of service with the department, Kelly Holmes has led the firefighters under his command through a great many rescues, including leading a group during the June, 1969, search for a young boy lost in the Great Smoky Mountains and getting called to the train derailment and propane explosion in Waverly in 1978, which took the lives of a number of Waverly's finest ; and

WHEREAS, Chief Holmes has served his post with honor and integrity, cultivating a department known for its excellence in service and bravery in the face of incredible danger, all while operating on the smallest of budgets; his leadership abilities inspire the firefighters around him, and Jackson Mayor Jerry Gist stated that "he knows his equipment, he knows his personnel, [and] he knows what they're capable of doing," and that understanding has positively impacted the department during his tenure as chief; and

WHEREAS, Madison County Mayor Jimmy Harris has said that "Chief Holmes is the bedrock on which our County Fire Department was built. I give him a lot of credit for us having what we have today. His hard work and dedication has helped us build a fire department and maintenance program which is second to none in the state of Tennessee"; and

WHEREAS, he is an active and important part of his community and his profession, participating in numerous worthy organizations, including the Fire Chiefs Association, to which he dedicated his time and leadership through two terms as the organization's president; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Kelly Holmes was chosen by the Jackson Exchange Club as that organization's "Man of the Year" in 1975, received the Humanitarian Service Award from the American Red Cross in 2005, gained the Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal for his service to the United States Army, and was named in the 1965 edition of *Outstanding Young Men of America*; and

WHEREAS, he is a devoted member of the Bemis United Methodist Church, which he has served faithfully for more than fifty years, and has given of his time and abilities to stand as the Chairman of the Board and the Chairman of Trustees, in addition to his service to several other committees; and

WHEREAS, Chief Holmes exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean, and he eagerly anticipates the opportunities retirement will afford him to spend time with his family and enjoy life in the country; and

WHEREAS, he is perhaps proudest of the love and support he shares with his wife, Willadene, his children, Donna and Ralph, his daughter-in-law, Jackie, and his grandson, Joe; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Kelly Holmes has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues and firefighters across the State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to Kelly Holmes our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors and offer our debt of gratitude for a long and dedicated career devoted to protecting the lives and property of the citizens of Madison County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.